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DEPT FOR AF/W, INR/AA (BGRAVES)

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [SL](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION ANNOUNCES CERTIFIED
RESULTS, PRESIDENTIAL RUNOFF WILL BE SEPT 8

REF: A) FREETOWN 501 B) FREETOWN 501 C) FREETOWN 493
D) FREETOWN 484 E) FREETOWN 482 F) FREETOWN
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Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Elizabeth Susie Pratt for reason
s 1.4 (b and d)

11. (U) On August 25, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) released the official certified results of the August 11 Presidential and Parliamentary elections (Ref A). Presiding at a news conference at the NEC Media Center located at the British Council, NEC Chairperson Dr. Christiana Thorpe announced a second round in the Presidential election race will be held September 8 because no presidential candidate received the requisite 55 percent for victory. The official campaigning period for the presidential runoff began August 25 and will conclude September 6.

12. (U) Thorpe said the NEC learned valuable lessons from the first round that will help simplify the second round in terms of polling and expedite tallying and declaring the results. She cautioned that weather still remains the most formidable challenge for September 8. It is anticipated that the unofficial results will be known as soon as September 10, and the official certified results would be completed within a week of the election.

13. (C) Thorpe also responded to allegations of improprieties by NEC staff. Thorpe defended her employees and said the NEC sets high standards for its staff, demanding and receiving neutrality as the primary attribute for those who work in the Commission. She encouraged anyone with complaints to submit credible evidence to support their allegations and promised that the NEC would thoroughly investigate these charges and remove staff if necessary. In recent meetings with the Ambassador, both All People's Congress (APC) presidential candidate Ernest Koroma and People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) presidential candidate Charles Margai allege that NEC Commissioner for the Eastern Region Edward Nyaley is a strong Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) supporter and had influenced the outcome of the first round vote in that region (Refs B and C).

14. (SBU) The potential for conflict remains a concern. On August 26, SLPP and APC supporters clashed in Freetown after party supporters taunted each other and tore down each others, campaign posters. According to initial Sierra Leone Police (SLP) reports, the APC mobilized its supporters and began marching towards the SLPP Party Headquarters. The SLP responded and reportedly fired tear gas to disperse the crowd and restore calm. There were two arrests but it is unclear to which party those arrested belonged.

15. (C) COMMENT: The second round in the presidential election will be more competitive than the first, and there will be a greater likelihood for clashes between SLPP and APC

supporters during the short campaign period. The international community continues to call for calm, and UN police advisors are working closely with the SLP to revise the Police operational plan to redeploy police officers from upcountry to hotspots in Freetown. Sources at the UN report the SLP will request invoking the Military Aid to Civil Power (MACP) policy on a limited capacity to provide the SLP with additional security personnel from the military, who will operate strictly under the authority of the SLP. END COMMENT.
HULL